



FEMA *Forward*

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DHS Celebrates Five Years and Looks to Future



President George W. Bush addressed the Department of Homeland Security five-year anniversary celebration event along with Secretary Michael Chertoff.

Since March 2003, DHS has remained dedicated to protecting the American people, reducing the risk of terrorist attacks, and enhancing our nation's preparedness and response capabilities. Throughout its five-year history, the department has undergone tremendous growth and made significant progress in a number of areas. In remarks made during the ceremony marking the five-year anniversary, President Bush and Secretary Michael Chertoff made special mention regarding FEMA's role, and the future of DHS.

President Bush stated, "We've worked with officials in 75 major metropolitan areas to improve the ability of first responders to communicate clearly in an emergency. We've helped establish mutual aid agreements within states, and strengthened the Emergency Management Assistance Compact among states — so that when communities need help from their neighbors, the right assistance will get to the right people at the right time.

"We've learned from our mistakes to improve our response when disaster strikes. When Hurricane Katrina hit our nation's Gulf Coast, it exposed weaknesses in America's emergency response capabilities. So we retooled and restructured FEMA. Since Hurricane Katrina, we've improved FEMA's logistics management, strengthened its operations planning, augmented disaster assistance programs and provided the agency with additional personnel and resources. And we

have seen outstanding results as a result of these efforts.

"FEMA's response to the California wildfires, to the Minneapolis bridge collapse, and the tornadoes that struck the Mississippi Valley last month were exemplary. Today FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security — because of these efforts, are better prepared. There's still work to do, but we're doing it."

"Secretary Chertoff added, "Prior to 9/11, we did not have an effective emergency preparedness and response system capable of handling an unprecedented catastrophic disaster like Hurricane Katrina. By integrating lessons painfully learned from that hurricane and countless other disasters, we have rebuilt and reinvigorated the Federal Emergency Management Agency, giving it capabilities it has never had before.

"We have released a new National Response Framework that builds upon its predecessor plans and will further unify and strengthen federal, state and local emergency response. And we have engaged the American people as never before in a nationwide effort to build a culture of preparedness for individuals, communities and businesses.

"For every one of these reasons, our nation is safer, it is stronger, and it is better prepared to confront the challenges of the 21st century. And we have continued to break down bureaucratic barriers so that this department can function as one team with one mission."



"FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror."

On the Ground In Iraq

In what could be considered an ultimate act of volunteerism, one of FEMA's core of headquarters personnel has gone far beyond normal deployment. Frank Disimino, a member of the Incident Management Systems Integration Division, Resource Management Branch, arrived in Baghdad at the very beginning of 2008.

Traveling overseas during the holidays, Disimino landed in Baghdad just before New Year's Day.

Serving as a volunteer on loan to the U.S.

Department of State from FEMA, Disimino will serve a 12-month tour as a member of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Province of Kirkuk (Al Tameen). He will be overseeing emergency management operations.

Disimino heeded the State Department's call for federal employees to assist in filling a number of vacancies for its mission in Iraq. He is one of about 40 federal employees outside the State Department that volunteered to go overseas.

Disimino serves FEMA as an Emergency Management Specialist

developing resource typing and credentialing activities in public health, medical and emergency medical services.

Disimino is author of *NIMS Guide 001* on resource typing, which expands on the base NIMS.

Disimino is married and has two teenage children with whom he communicates regularly. He is slated to return to the United States and to his position with FEMA in the winter of 2009.



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FEMA Going Global

More and more, foreign nations are looking to FEMA to share its expertise as the world's preeminent emergency management agency. In the first week of February, FEMA played host to visiting delegations from Romania, India and Israel. Each delegation was interested in learning more about how FEMA coordinates the response to a major disaster.

In February, Mike Buckley from the Mitigation

Directorate briefed the Romanian Minister of Interior and Administrative Reform and his staff on FEMA's flood management programs, including the National Flood Insurance, Flood Hazard Mapping and Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs. In turn, Romanian Minister Cristian David discussed the disasters Romania has experienced lately.

Due to changing weather

patterns, Romania has seen unusually high rainfall and subsequent flooding. The Romanian delegation also toured FEMA's National Response Coordination Center (NRCC). Minister David is interested in establishing a European Response Center similar to the NRCC.

In the same week, FEMA International Affairs staff accompanied a study group from India on

a tour of the Louisiana Joint Field Office in New Orleans and, together with the Disaster Operations Directorate, conducted a tour of the NRCC for a delegation from the Israeli Army who received a briefing on CERT. Foreign delegations also frequently visit FEMA's training facilities — the Emergency Management Institute and Center for Domestic Preparedness.



During the recent Executive Brown Bag luncheon, Assistant

Administrator for Disaster Assistance Carlos J. Castillo fielded questions about formaldehyde and the challenges he's faced during his tenure at FEMA.

About 35 FEMA staffers filled a headquarters conference room for the one-hour program in March.

Castillo Brown Bags It With Employees

Another 50 people from around the country participated via teleconference.

"I've been here since July and I'm still learning by the minute," Castillo said in his introductory remarks.

"People pick on FEMA. It's easy to get frustrated with negative news stories, but it's key to keep in mind we're out there helping people and, for the most part, people appreciate what we do," he told employees.

Questioners sought Castillo's thoughts on a variety of subjects related to disaster assistance, but most of the questions focused on travel trailers and formaldehyde.

When asked about the most significant challenges he's faced at FEMA, he cited several: "Learning how the agency works, what's been done historically, what's worked and what hasn't" and "addressing formaldehyde issues." To an employee who

asked how FEMA staffers can help improve the agency's reputation, Castillo replied, "I've never met a group of more dedicated and enthusiastic employees. Showing your dedication helps improve our image. We're all FEMA."

The luncheon forums are designed to promote discussion between FEMA leadership and employees on agency initiatives in an informal setting.

In 2007 FEMA improved its ability to respond with timely and effective aid with each disaster response, most notably in support of the communities devastated by tornadoes in Florida and Kansas by helping families before the disasters were even declared and delivering responsible and effective aid when it was needed. And the agency continued to polish its forward leaning response nationally with the wildfires in California,

Hurricane Dean and Tropical Storm Erin in the Southwest, massive ice storms that gripped the Midwest and a powerful Nor'easter that battered New England.

The agency also built on its improved response capabilities to deliver more effective recovery assistance to help rebuild and strengthen communities. An entire town in Kansas essentially is being rebuilt following a deadly tornado there. FEMA was onsite within hours of the devastation with command and control mobile facilities to help

the town reestablish government, and began providing recovery assistance through temporary housing and direct aid to victims and through grants and technical assistance to rebuild key infrastructure.

Additionally, FEMA grants made it possible to provide a temporary facility to fill in for a destroyed high school and then to replace it permanently in Alabama; and through a new construction concept, a destroyed Georgia hospital will be replaced in record time. Improved federal assistance also extended to strengthening emergency

managers and the communities themselves. Through grants and direct involvement, FEMA supported cross-border initiatives and provided National Incident Management System (NIMS) training for tribes in Oklahoma and in Texas. And, in Maine, the agency provided funding and mitigation improvements to a community so that its sewer system is better protected and that residents will not be adversely affected the next time it floods. These efforts by dedicated FEMA personnel prove that the agency vision is moving forward.



The Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Ala., hopes to cut both costs and greenhouse gas emissions through the purchase of three electric cars.

Mike King, CDP associate director for operations, said the cars are used for travel between the different areas of the CDP campus. "We have a fairly dispersed campus with six

different enclaves," he said. "We're constantly going back and forth, so we wanted to find a way to be more environmentally friendly and save money at the same time."

The CDP purchased the cars in late fall, but did not begin using them until a couple months ago, CDP spokesman Shannon Arledge said. He said employees had to undergo training before using the vehicles.

Three types of cars were purchased. One seats four, another seats six and the third is

a small utility truck.

Kent Davis, attorney for the CDP, said he has gotten some strange looks driving around CDP in the odd-looking vehicles.

"People are clearly wondering what the car is," he said. "It is quite different than a regular car." Davis said the cars can go up to about 30 miles-per-hour and last for 30 miles-per-charge. They plug into any standard electrical outlet. He said that while the cars are street-legal, they would not be taken outside the CDP campus.

The timing for purchasing the cars happened to coincide with an

order from President Bush that federal agencies attempt to reduce petroleum consumption, Davis said. "A lot of people around here are excited about this," he said. "They see us as being stewards of the environment, so we like doing these kinds of things."

The CDP is a unit of FEMA's National Preparedness Directorate. It trains emergency workers from around the country.

CDP Travels Green

Preparing Your Pets for Disaster



Let's talk about preparing your family's pets to handle disaster, starting with the human part of the family. There are three steps for Having a family disaster plan in place:

1. Have a Plan
2. Make a Kit
3. Be Informed

The same holds true for Fluffy, Fido, Polly and Stuart Little: your dog, cat, bird or hamster. Have a plan.

Your family should have performed a survey of your community, making note of what could happen to it.

Then, your family should

have portable pet crates, cat carriers or cages/aquariums that can be taken with you in the car. It is recommended that you get your pets used to these containers by taking them to your veterinarian for exams and on occasional trips.

This practice will be useful because, when disaster strikes, oftentimes pets are so scared that you will have a hard time just finding Fido to put him in the carrier, let alone transporting him.

Make a list of people, including your relatives, neighbors, or friends, who would be willing to care for

your pets while you're at a shelter. Make a second list of county animal shelters, mass care shelters, e.g., a school or community center, and pet-friendly motel chains such as Days Inn that will take pets.

Make a Kit. Now we need to include along with our own supplies, additional water and food supplies for the pets, a litter box for Fluffy, Polly and Stuart Little, doo-doo bags for Fido; pet ID and flea collars, your pet's medications and dosages and your veterinarian's name, address, phone number and email address.

The final step, "Be Informed" is the same for pets as it is for humans: Use the battery-powered radio to stay informed about evacuation orders, pet shelter info, evacuation routes, and the all-important FEMA 800 number to tele-register for disaster assistance.

For further information about this subject, please visit the FEMA website, download a copy of *Are You Ready*, and a copy of the DHS Pet Preparedness brochure.

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FEMA

Over Coffee

Discussing Issues of Interest

Myth: March Madness Basketball Pools, No Harm — No Foul!

Fact:

NCAA pools violate government regulations — and that's a fact!

Regulations promulgated by the General Services Administration (GSA) bar anyone from participating in games for money or personal property, the operating of gambling devices or the conduct of a lottery or pool while in or on property controlled by GSA. [41 C.F.R. § 101-20.306, or 41 C.F.R. § 102-74.395] This regulation applies not only to federal employees, but also to members of the public while they are visiting GSA-controlled property.

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) Government-wide Standards of Conduct regulations, contained at 5 C.F.R. Part 735, prohibit federal

employees from conducting or participating, "In any gambling activity, including the operation of a gambling device, in conducting a lottery or pool, a game for money or property, or selling or purchasing a numbers slip or ticket," while on government-owned or leased property or while on government duty. [5 C.F.R. § 735.201]

When read together, these authorities clearly prohibit gambling (including lotteries, football or basketball pools and similar activities) undertaken by agency employees while on official duty, while on government property, or while using government computers and government vehicles, unless the employee undertakes the activity as part of his or her official law enforcement duties. Under federal



common law, gambling is defined as:

1. The furnishing of consideration (betting something of value — usually money),
2. In a game of chance
3. That offers a reward prize — money or otherwise. *FCC v. American Broadcasting Co.*, 347 U.S. 284, 290-91 n.8 (1954), and *U.S. v. Tansley*, 986 F.2d 880, 886 (5th Cir. 1993). An event that does not include all three of these elements is not gambling.

Violations of these regulations may result in disciplinary action, including removal from the federal service. Although federal agencies may conduct fundraising activities for approved charitable organizations during the annual Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) (governed by criteria established by the Office of Personnel Management), it is important to note that the CFC does not authorize gambling and that "The CFC is the only authorized charitable fund-raising drive in the federal workplace. No other fund-raising drive may be conducted in the federal workplace without the express written permission of the Director of OPM. 5 C.F.R. § 950.102(a).

Source: *IEC Journal*

<http://www.iecjournal.org/iec/2008/03/putting-a-dampe.html>

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FEEDBACK

Please feel free to contact us with stories, news and items of interest to FEMA employees as well as your comments, ideas, suggestions or questions.

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This edition, along with printer friendly versions of previous **FEMA Forward** issues, are available online at: <http://online.fema.net>

FEMA HQ News You Can Use

Information from the Office of Management

Winchester on the Mind

In 2004 FEMA began working with the General Services Administration (GSA) to acquire new space to meet the requirement to house non-classified FEMA personnel from the Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center (MWEOC) located in Berryville, Va. This new facility, built in Winchester, Va., specifically for FEMA, is nearing completion.

The 135,000 square foot facility includes 105,000 square feet of

office space and 30,000 square feet of light industrial space for storage.

The four-story building boasts many unique features, including an outdoor amphitheatre, a state-of-the-art training room and beautiful views of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The facility is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified, which equates to lower operating costs, reduced waste sent to landfills,

energy and water conservation and a healthier and safer environment for its occupants.

FEMA's security staff played a major role in the design of the building's features to ensure the overall security of the facility. There is state-of-the-art surveillance and intrusion detection equipment and an access control system. There will be 24-hour uniformed guard services and magnetometers and x-ray equipment will be in use. The building's dedication is slated for April.

Latest Test Results Show Low Formaldehyde Levels In Mobile Homes

New results following the first series of tests conducted by FEMA to determine formaldehyde levels in mobile homes since earlier Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) testing in the Gulf have demonstrated very low levels of formaldehyde.

Thirteen mobile homes were tested at a staging area in Oregon and all results show that these units have levels that are well below the average identified by CDC for units tested in the Gulf.

As a result of these findings, FEMA will release these 13 mobile homes to the State of

Oregon for distribution to residents who were affected by flooding in December. FEMA will also continue to test additional mobile homes stored in Hope, Ark. and Selma, Ala.

Testing unoccupied units before releasing them for occupancy is the latest in a range of proactive measures FEMA is taking in response to recent formaldehyde findings by the CDC.

According to the interim CDC report on testing in occupied manufactured housing units conducted in the Gulf in December and

January, all types had at least some units with elevated levels as compared to indoor air in conventional homes in the United States.

FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Health Affairs have developed procedures to ensure the consistent and reliable testing of temporary housing units. The same protocol will be used for all air quality testing, no matter where it takes place, whether at storage sites, staging areas, forward staging areas or on private property.

Your WebTA

The Payroll Division is working with Time and Attendance representatives to facilitate FEMA's transition to WebTA, the new time and attendance system.

Most offices at headquarters are using WebTA, and the Regions are expected to follow soon. Below is a summary of the transition schedule to date.

Pay Period 03-2008 (February 3 through February 16)

HQ Staff Offices **complete** transition:

Office of the Administrator, Law Enforcement, Policy and Program Analysis, Executive Secretariat, Office of External Affairs, Associate Administrator, Office of Equal Rights, Office of Chief Financial Officer, Office of Management, Office of Chief of Counsel, and National Capital Region Coordination.

HQ Program Offices **begin** transition:

Disaster Operations, Logistics Management, Disaster Assistance, Mitigation, National Preparedness, National Continuity, U.S. Fire Administration.

Pay Period 04-2008 (February 17 through March 1)

HQ Program Offices **complete** transition:

TBD, pending PP03 completion

All Regions and TROs **begin** transition:

Pay Period 05-2008 (March 2 through March 15)

All Regions and TROs **complete** transition:

TBD, pending PP04 completion

Training for WebTA is done through an online tutorial that is available for timekeepers and employees.

The website for the tutorials is:

<http://wta.hs.nfc.usda.gov/dhs>.

Human Capital staff has provided review sessions in conjunction with the available tutorials, and additional sessions should be announced shortly. There are three options for participating in review sessions:

1. On-site in person at Crystal City location
 2. By computer using DataXChange
 3. By listening through conference bridge
- The conference bridge and DataXChange combination has yielded successful results and allows employees to get quality training from any location.



FEMA

FEMA HQ News You Can Use

Enterprise Applications Development Integration and Sustainment (EADIS)

The FEMA Information Technology Services Division's mission is to provide application development services for all of FEMA. The scope of the EADIS acquisition encompasses a full range of application development services and associated infrastructure support.

FEMA is moving toward a service-oriented architecture. However, FEMA's current application infrastructure depends upon legacy applications that must continue to exist and be reliable and responsive until — over time — they can be migrated to the evolving web-based, service-oriented architecture environment. EADIS will be the contract to execute the software development needs of FEMA program offices.

FEMA will acquire separate contractor support to develop the vision and plans for its information technology services and support. The services being acquired are commercial in nature and are available under the DHS Enterprise Acquisition Gateway for Leading-Edge Solution (EAGLE) multiple-award contract.

FEMA is conducting a multi-phase EAGLE competition to select a single prime contractor to perform these services. FEMA will award a contract to the company that submits the proposal demonstrating the best value to government.

Donations? — Problem Solved

FEMA is working with the Aidmatrix Foundation to solve a major problem — tracking unsolicited donations and unaffiliated volunteers flooding into a disaster-hit community that can overwhelm response and recovery specialists and create a logistical nightmare.

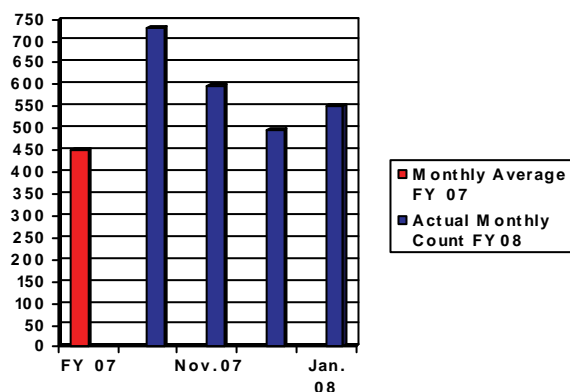
Aidmatrix is building an information management tool to enable states to be better prepared to provide an effective way for the general public to make their offers of goods and volunteer services in the event of a disaster. During a recent trip to Washington, D.C., Aidmatrix President and CEO Scott McCallum, a former governor of Wisconsin, provided an overview of the *National Donations Management Network* (NDMN) to FEMA staff.

Funded in part by FEMA, NDMN is a web-based system launched in 2006 that connects government, the private sector and nonprofit organizations to a database that tracks offers of donated goods and volunteer services in real time and helps manage the volunteer and donations process.

Currently more than one-half of U.S. residents live in states participating in the NDM network. FEMA Voluntary Agency Coordinator Ben Curran is optimistic that other states will soon follow suit. "We expect to get most of the states signed up to utilize the Aidmatrix tool to support their volunteer and donations operations," said Curran.

FEMA Security Increases Workload

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) requires that federal agencies find a more efficient and timely process for granting security clearances. To meet this requirement, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) developed the Electronic Questionnaire for Investigation Processing (E-Quip) and began to require its use for background investigations in 2006.



FEMA Personnel Security fully transitioned to E-Quip by January 1, 2007 and meets all OPM requirements. For instance, OPM states that the packet deficiency rate should not exceed five percent. The most recent OPM performance report shows FEMA with only a one percent deficiency rate. OPM requires National Security cases to be submitted via E-Quip within 14 days. FEMA's average is nine days.

The security specialists in the Case Management Unit work hard to meet OPM standards with an increasing number of cases. A record of 5,405 background investigation packets were processed during FY2007, compared to only 1,073 in FY2006. The chart above illustrates the trend of increased workloads.



FEMA